



# AETC News Clips

## Randolph AFB, Texas



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### **Suburbs doing their part to help evacuees**

### **Cities offering fire and police department aid for the victims of Katrina.**

Web Posted: 09/21/2005 12:00 AM CDT

**Chuck McCollough and Amanda Reimherr**

San Antonio suburbs contributing personnel or equipment to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort are showing that small cities can make a big difference.

"The contributions of small cities have collectively helped more than we can measure. Suburban cities, like individual donors, do what they can within their means," said Jay Feibelman, mayor of Garden Ridge on the Northeast Side, which loaned a police officer to the hurricane-stricken area.

Garden Ridge officer Charlie Romans traveled to Mississippi with the nonprofit Bexar County Mounted Patrol to help with hurricane relief.

"Six officers from (the Bexar County area) were used for crowd control, search and rescue, and to prevent looting," said Romans, who recently returned from the weeklong effort.

"We had people waiting in line for hours to get water and ice, and they were getting restless, especially if someone cut in line. Our horses had a calming effect on them, and some people, after getting water, came up and asked if our horses needed water," Romans said.

The mounted officers also rode through debris-filled areas. They helped scare off looters from at least one house and reassured residents staying in their shattered houses that there was a law enforcement presence.

"I just wish I could have done more," Romans said.

Feibelman said the city was happy to cooperate.

"Charlie asked the city if he could go, and the Police Department worked it so he stayed on the payroll and it didn't cost us any overtime," the mayor said, adding that private donors contributed \$1,000 to help defray the cost of the round trip to Mississippi.

Here is a roundup of the contributions from Northwest Side suburban cities:

#### **Castroville**

The Castroville Fire Department sent some of its firefighters to help set up the Levi Strauss and KellyUSA shelters, said Timothy Fousse, emergency management coordinator for that city.

"I am continuing to monitor the situation and respond to any requests for help we receive. I will find people to fill the need of whatever we are asked to do to help out," he said.

*San Antonio Express News*

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Fousse also said the residents have teamed up with city officials to raise money for various relief efforts.

"One of our councilmen, Hank Seay, helped to collect funds from local businesses and residents that were used to purchase bottled water and personal hygiene supplies. They raised over \$6,000 to help evacuees in the San Antonio area," he said.

"The city is glad to help in any way we can. We will do whatever we can as the efforts continue."

### **Grey Forest**

The city of Grey Forest and the Grey Forest Volunteer Fire Department have teamed up with residents to gather items for local evacuees affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Due to the limited amount of space at the city offices, officials have requested all donations be dropped off at the blue horse trailer between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Helotes Hills Methodist Church, 13222 Bandera Road.

The contents of the trailer are delivered every evening to the shelter at KellyUSA. Donations also will be accepted at the annual Scenic Loop Playground Club potluck dinner 5 p.m. Sunday at the SLPC building on Sherwood Trail.

For more information about the Grey Forest relief effort, call Freda Hoffman at (210) 695-8588.

### **Helotes**

The Helotes Fire Department collected \$7,300 in a one-day Fill the Boot drive Sept. 1. The money was donated to the American Red Cross, said Fire Chief Walton Daugherty.

"The guys really hustled down there," Daugherty said. "It was a matter, honestly, of going vehicle to vehicle when they stopped at the light. Hands were coming out of the windows everywhere."

That morning, three firefighters collected \$2,200. That afternoon, another handful gathered \$4,400. Others dropped off checks as large as \$500 at the fire station, he said.

There are no other drives scheduled so far, but Daugherty said they may try to collect more money again soon.

"People know those folks need help and they're willing to help out," he said.

"Hopefully that attitude will continue, because these folks really need the help."

### **Leon Valley**

The city of Leon Valley aided Hurricane Katrina relief efforts at home and at the site of the disaster. Leon Valley firefighters Alex O'Rourke and Mike Poston traveled to New Orleans for 10 days to aid in the rescue efforts after Katrina roared through the city. The two firefighters helped organize rescue missions

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in the command and control center as well as riding through the flooded streets on Jet Skis searching for stranded residents.

Two other firefighters helped set up shower and decontamination facilities at the KellyUSA shelter so evacuees could clean up after they arrived.

Robert Lee, assistant fire chief for the city of Leon Valley, said the firefighters' involvement is a result of training they received from the South Texas Regional Advisory Council, a mechanism to distribute trauma funds for emergency services.

"Our guys are trained in water rescue skills as part of STRAC," he said. "The city derives a benefit by participating in STRAC because the firefighters receive specialized training that Leon Valley could use later on, and in return we can serve our community wherever we are needed. So there was a need in our American community and we responded."

Four Leon Valley police officers volunteered on their days off to work security detail at KellyUSA.

"I am proud that our Leon Valley officers are helping out," Leon Valley Police Chief Randy Oakes said. "The safety of our town is not compromised because they are doing this on their days off, but considering how small our fire and police force is, a significant percentage of our guys have helped out, and that is just great."



COURTESY PHOTO

Scherz donated the services of its EMS units to KellyUSA as part of the suburban city's response to hurricane victims coming to the San Antonio area. Other suburbs also contributed to the effort.





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Kenn Brown/Courtesy Photos

### Grandfather's 60-year-old POW story still inspiring

By Kristin Mamrack  
kmamrack@cdispach.com

**A**s camouflaged men and women stood in silent formation under a tombstone-grey sky, Friday, in a quiet voice, Col. Stephen W. Wilson, commander of the 14th Flying Training Wing of Columbus Air Force Base, read the haunting words of his grandfather, a survivor of the Bataan Death March.

"To those who came back, came a lesson," retired Col. Ovid "Zero" Wilson said in a speech given during the early

1950s. "There are a few things men can't live without."

Detailing the "few things," Ovid Wilson recalled his experience as a prisoner of war.

During the Bataan Death March, the elder Wilson said men learned the value of fresh air when hundreds of them were "shut up" and stood so close together that when one died, he remained standing.

"When they finally opened those doors and let those of us that survived out and those of us that fell to fall, we learned we can't live without air."

Please see **POW** on **Page 14A**



**Top:** Senior Airman Nicole Paille, of the Medical Group at Columbus Air Force Base, hands the flag to Senior Airman Trae Clark, of the 37th Flying Training Squadron, during the POW/MIA Retreat ceremony Friday at the base. **Above:** Veterans listen as Col. Stephen W. Wilson, commander of CAFB, gives the speech his grandfather gave more than 50 years ago, after being a prisoner of war.





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### POW

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Explaining how men, allowed only four spoonfuls of water a day, often drank their own urine or cut the throat of an enemy to drink his blood, he said thirst was "vicious."

But food was the "greatest test of character," he said, adding "hunger separates men from boys."

"Training, character, and tradition are leveled by constant hunger."

Finally, Ovid Wilson said men can't live without hope.

"People die from a lack of it," he explained. "They died because it seemed the easiest thing to do. If what happened there could happen to everyone in the United States for a week, what a change it would make!"

Wilson wanted people to know if everyone understood what a POW does, the "security of the country would never again be endangered by complacency and red tape."

His grandson, Col. Stephen

Wilson, wanted the crowd gathered at CAFB for a Retreat Ceremony honoring the country's POWs and those missing in action to know the same thing.

"This is an important day of remembrance and I hope it will be for my son and his family," Stephen Wilson said of National POW/MIA Recognition Day. "There's not a family in America that doesn't have somebody affected by war. Never forget the POWs or those missing whose fate is still unknown."

Wilson, whose father, Joe

served with the U.S. Army in Vietnam and whose uncle, Gail, was killed in Vietnam, said his family, including his 14-year-old son Sterling, honors his grandfather with "all kinds of treasures."

"We have postcards he sent to my grandmother once a year where he would check blocks indicating his condition," Wilson said. "And we have pictures and notes."

"Sterling, a frequent visitor to Texas where his father and grandfather are, relives it and I remind him," he continued. "We tell granddad stories."

The Bataan Death March began April 10, 1942.

After Japan invaded several southeastern Asian countries, including the Philippines, in 1941, about 70,000 Filipino and United States' soldiers surrendered to the Japanese, under General Masaharu Homma.

The captives, most of whom were emaciated and ill, were forced to march about 100 miles to a prison camp.

Those who fell behind were executed and all were beaten randomly, denied food and water and

tortured through various methods, including the Japanese "sun treatment" when they were forced to sit in the blistering sun without shade or water.

It took the POWs over a week to reach their destination and only about 54,000 reached the camp.

Following the 1945 surrender of Japan, Homma was convicted by an Allied commission of war crimes and executed on April 3, 1946.

*The Commercial Dispatch*

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## Luke Engineers Come to Keesler's Aid

Air Force News | By 1st Lt. Brady Smith | September 19, 2005



KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, Miss. - Helping repair Keesler after Hurricane Katrina struck the base is not the only thing on the mind of civil engineers deployed here; they are also helping the people here get back on their feet.

The engineers, deployed from the 56th Civil Engineer Squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., are helping the 81st Training Wing repair the damage Hurricane Katrina left behind.

Not only are they repairing damage on base, but Sept. 17 they were at Stanley Morgan's house removing moldy drywall, sopping wet insulation, scattered debris, ruined furniture and, unfortunately, memories collected throughout the years.

The infrastructure management chief's house in nearby Biloxi sits on a foundation about a foot higher than the ground. It was flooded by at least 6 feet water, and many things were still dripping wet when the engineers arrived.

"Losing furniture doesn't bother me," said Antoinette Morgan. She pointed down to an old high-school yearbook and some family photos and said, "This is what bothers me; losing personal items of memories. Eleven years of my son's life is sitting out there in that pile of trash."

As Mr. Morgan watched the Luke civil engineers carry soaked furniture, saturated wooden dressers, televisions and swollen books to the pile of trash, he was thankful they were here helping.

"It's a blessing to have them here," he said. "They've saved me tons of hours of work, and what they're doing for me and even for our neighbor is absolutely a blessing."

Senior Airman Adrian Silerio, who works in the structure shop at Luke, was here three months ago for a week of training and was able to see the base before Katrina swept through Mississippi.

"Seeing this destruction is unbelievable, and helping Mr. Morgan this way is the least we could

*Arizona Daily Star*

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do,” Airman Silerio said. “We wish we could do so much more.”

“It’s definitely tiring work, especially with the humidity,” said Master Sgt. Randy Kinser, a flight superintendent. “But there’s nothing better than the feeling of helping someone who needs help. We have helped a number of families around here in this same way, but the very first one was probably the most difficult. That family had little kids and they watched as we threw away all their toys. That was real hard and it affected each one of us.

“When these guys aren’t working at Keesler and fixing things on base, they’re volunteering to help out people like Mr. Morgan,” Sergeant Kinser said.

“It’s nice to put a face to the overall mission, and it’s definitely rewarding when you’re able to help someone directly,” said 2nd Lt. Scott Thomas, a Luke civil engineer.

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### **Environmental assessment at Vance up for review**

The Enid News and Eagle

A draft environmental assessment of military family housing privatization at Vance Air Force Base has been prepared. Vance is proposing to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on this assessment.

The analysis considered potential effects of the privatization plan, including noise, land use, air quality, socioeconomics, environmental justice, cultural resources, hazardous materials and waste, infrastructure/utilities, earth resources, water resources and biological resources.

The results, as found in draft assessment, show the privatization would not have an adverse impact on the environment.

Copies of the draft FONSI and EA showing the analysis are available for review at the Public Library of Enid and Garfield County and the Vance Library.

Public comments on the draft FONSI and EA will be accepted through Oct. 24.

Written comments and inquiries should be directed by mail to Bob Farrell, 71st Flying Training Wing Public Affairs, 246 Brown Parkway, Suite 120, Vance AFB OK 73705, or by phone to (580) 213-7136.

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## Vance gets high marks for handling of safety, the environment

CNHI News Service

— By Jeff Mullin Senior Writer

Col. Chris Thelen, new commander of the 71st Mission Support Group at Vance Air Force Base, didn't have a good feeling waiting for the results of an assessment of how Vance handles environmental, safety and occupational health issues.

"I was extremely pessimistic," said Thelen. "When somebody comes in with a team of 23 people to look at a base the size of Vance, they are going to be able to dig in and dig in deep."

The group, with the un-wieldy title of Air Education and Training Command Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Compliance Assessment Management Program team, did dig deep during its week-long scrutiny of whether Vance is safe and environmentally friendly.

But Thelen's pessimism was unfounded.

The team found no significant violations and lauded Vance's treatment of safety and environmental issues. Vance has not had a significant finding since 1991.

"They described us as outstanding," he added. "They gave us a few areas for improvement but no enforcement action vulnerability findings."

The AETC team of experts looks into every area of safety, from the flying training mission to making sure families living in base housing don't plug too many appliances into one socket.

"They pretty much do a top down review of our programs," said Thelen. "It is very specific, very focused on these three areas. If there's an issue out there, these folks will

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find it."

Even the smallest details didn't escape the assessment team.

"They were observing our masking tape we use for paint operations," said Thelen, "and assessing whether or not the residual paint on this masking tape might pose a potential hazard in the waste stream if it wasn't disposed of in a particular way. It's down to that minutiae.

"Doing well in that kind of an assessment demonstrates that folks really are on the ball, they're taking good care of the environment, they're taking good care of each other and themselves."

Most of the problems found were minor, Thelen said, such as a leaving a chemical drum open when it should have been closed.

"We told them (the team), it's nice to get a pat on the back," said Thelen, "but it's even better for them to identify any problem areas that we might have, because that gives us a road map for how we can improve what we think of as a very sound program to begin with. And they certainly did that."

Most of the problems pointed out, Thelen said, were fixed before the team left the base, but some will take longer.

"We take all of their comments, all of their observations, large and small," said Thelen.

"Over the next 60 days we're going to create a plan to make them right."

The team scrutinized the base using not only Air Force standards but also those of civilian agencies such as Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Environmental Protection Agency.

"It's a complete look at every regulation that we are governed by," said John Felt Jr., environmental branch manager for Computer Sciences Corporation, the prime contractor at Vance.

The last external assessment came in 2003, but the next one isn't scheduled until 2008. Vance holds yearly internal assessments.

The team looked at CSC's safety and environmental practices, as well as those of Air

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Force personnel.

"Everyone across the base helped with this excellent inspection," said Felt. "It's not just the environmental department, it takes everyone on base doing what's needed -- military, contractors and civil service."

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CNHI News Service

### THUMBS UP

Thumbs up to the city of Enid for following through with the transfer of 132 acres of land to Vance Air Force Base.

This is part of the ongoing process to enhance Vance. It's important to the military mission and the security interests of the base for the Air Force to have control of this land. This allows Vance to look into the future and decide how to use the land to best develop the base.

Congratulations to all involved in working to get this transfer accomplished.

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